To Virginia Durr , hopefully via Bob Graetz, from Harold Weisberg 5/25/94

Dear Virginia,

Your "Outside the Magic Circle" is a delight as well as an important account of what was at once a terrible and rewarding era in our history. It has come between me and the work that means much to me because with my health fragile and my work unique there is much of what I regard as an important event in our history that will be lost if I do not record it.

The ecologist in me has me using clear-side paper, of which I have much in the discarded pages of a new book. Perhaps the other sides will give you an indication of what it says and in fact proves with, among other things, about a third of a million pages of once secret pages I got through more than a dozen FOIA lawsuits. All will be a free public archive at local Hood College, an excellent small one with a fine faculty. It was once a woman's college and is still largely that.

Early in your book I knew I'd have to write you so that can tell people as your records also will where they can get access to some of what you refer to, like the Senate Civil Liberties Committee's hearings. I have them, Joe Gelders did testify, displaying his still visible wounds from the broad studded leather belt with which he was flogged. In addition to the Bloody Harlan hearings I was borrowed by the DOJ to help it with its 1968 prosecutions. I've made notes from recollection on that.

What impels me to start this now, my memory not being as good as it once was, is to tell you, after getting to the end of your second part, that while you are absolutely correct in saying that Arnold, Fortas & Porter demanded that their loyalty (ugh) clients assure them that they were not Communists and in telling them that they'd drop them as clients if they lied, they did make an exception and I was part of it.

When State fired 10 of us in 1948 under the McCarran Rider, which did not require hearings or charges and I got neither, I got them to represent us. It was a pogrom. We were 10 liberal Jews, one a case of mistaken identity. One had been and said he had been a Communist. They did not drop him and they actually won for us. We got a public apology and we were rehired and then quit. Unprecedented, I think.

I'd known Arnold when he was head of anti-trust and in charge of all Nazi cartel work. In my writing I became a specialist in that area. Actually, before Pearl Harbor I was also an unregistered British agent in that field. I'd known Porter after he left the FCC, when his law firm was in the Earle Building. I did not know Fortas. The last time I saw him was at the memorial for Cliff in DC.

Like you and Cliff, Lil and I were never Communists. We were, a phrase you have not yet used in the book, "premature anti-fascists." Imagine such a concept!

I had another I think unprecedented victory over our domestic fascists when the Dies gang came after me when I was writing a book on them, the reason I did not accept your

offer to become part of the anti-poll tax committee you were then forming in Lee Geyer's office. In the end I got the Dies agent convicted of two felonies and the grand jury they convoked to "get " Pat Jackson and me refused to indict us. Lil was a real Mati Hari and what she learned told me what I had to know to beat the bastards. It was then that I got to know Vito Marcantonio. He became my best friend of that era. He lived with me in a small-two room apartment I had in the black ghetto at 313 HNW. I also provided him with transportation, including to the White House. I have a clear recollection of his excitement when he emerged ~~with~~ from a conference with FDR in which FDR made him a proposition he accepted. That was the year Marc had succeeded in getting his annual FEPC bill marked as "HR1." FDR said that he would establish ~~that fair~~ fair-employment practises administratively if Marc would withdraw his bill that FDR believed would cause dissention he wanted to avoid during the war atmosphere.

Marc was, as you say, ~~a~~ as honest a person as anyone could be.

If when you and Cliff visited him and Miriam he did not take you to Chiramello's coffee shop on the corner you missed a real treat. The best espresso and marvelous pastries and candies. Chiramello's brother was a Mussolini bodyguard. And one year when those who loved him in his district feared something would happen to him at swearig-in time, one of them got a seven-passenger Buick and escorted him, they thought to protect him. ~~Ok.~~ Chiramello was one, along with a pickpocted, Dzinni the Dip, the district's CP head, Gilberto Concepcion de Gracia, who had been counsel to the Albizu Compos ~~[illegible]~~ group, and I do not recall the others. Marc, who appreciated their concern and knew it was baseless, asked me to lose them for him until it was all over.

Later Lil went to work in Marc's office, with Edith Johnson.

We were in New York when there was a desparate search for Marc. His constituents knew that the cops were quite capabile of beating them up in arrest. One man knew he was wanted, wanted to ~~tourn~~ turn himself in, but fear of being beaten up unless Marc turned him in and saw the condition in which he was turned in and constituted an unspoken threat to the police if they touched him. I speant much of that Saturday night and early Sunday morning driving Willie Bianchi around to all the places Marc could be until we did find him.

When I was in the army, at Camp Shanks, NYC, Marc asked me to visit his brother at Rockland General Hospital, and I did when I could. I pulled guard duty in a part of that hospital the army had taken over so I had no trouble getting to ~~see~~ see him and spend some time with him and report back to Marc on how he was and whether he needed or wanted anything.

How I wish you and Cliff could have known Marc's mother! She lived in a fifth storey walkup. She attended each of his street-corner speeches, of which there were many, and she always carried a newspaper-with a lead pipe in it! Harold bother loved it and was embarrassed by it!

Especially when he had an appointment with FDR, and there were quite a few, I always

worried about getting him up on time. He read much and read much abed. He then read in particular Sandburg on Lincoln and much on Elisha Lovejoy.

And was he ever gregarious. Never abed until the wee hours!

The night that the grand jury refused to indict me and did indict the Dies fink Marc, Frank Hook and Joe Casey, among Congressmen, and a few others threw me a wonderful celebration party at the Madrillon. I'd written a speech I did not want him to give for Hook, He was half-Indian, half-Finn, from Michigan's upper peninsula and a real New Dealer. That night he sang two songs to me, "The Dies of Texas Are Upon You" and, referrinf to Dies' vice-chariman, Joe, "Stames Fell on Alabama." The restuarant let us keep going for hours after 2 a.m. closing. The band stayed, too.

Marc was not anti-Catholic. He was, in fact, part of the movement to get Mother Cabrini canonized. Spellman hated him. Marc had refused to kiss the ring. And, of course, there were those many policy differences.

You make passing reference to Viet Nam. It was on one of the earliest protests, by writers and editors, and I do not recall any refernce to that in the file drawers of FBI records on me that FBI had. The CIA marked seven names on the More than 100. Besides me I remember Doctor Spock.

I was free-lancing then and my hours were largely my own so I drove Marc to the plane the two days he returned to be available to his constituents and met the planes on which he returned.

He used to refer to me as "Philes," pronounced like "files." It was not because of the files I then had but a joking reference to "The Thin Man" movie starring, was it Bill Powell? He'd asked me to do such jobs for him and I did. To our great enjoyment over some. Like my discovering that Sol Bloom's daughter got and kept a decoration from Mussolini. Marc got all the time he wanted for that debate! (And from the other side, he got all the extra time he wanted from Ham Fish.)

It was surprising, given Marc's straighforward statements of his beliefs and positions, that he was held in so much respect by so many of his colleagues and liked by so many.

I was with him when GOP leader Joe Martin leaked to him what the GOP feared using, on efforts to get us in the war before Pearl Harbor. I was waiting for him in the cloakroom during the lend-lease debates when I think it was the expert on parliamentary practise, "Uncle Joe" Shannon of Miss Ouri, told the father of Al Gore and another Member that if they asked Marc to yield he invariably would and then where would they be? Shannon, or was it Cannon, always consulted Marc when he wrote about the Rules.

Oh the stories I could tell of what I recall! He was sui generis! Principled and like you and Cliff, Lil and be, addicted to basic Americanism so much abused by those who prate it!

Marc had diabetes. He gave himself shots and he had to have Orange juice if not something else within an hour, I then always had a job getting him to the House restaurant so he could have breakfast while the others lunched. I got to meet many of the Members then, when they

Whatever the purposes of the assassination, major policy changes were inevitable and they ensued.

So it is to make as comprehensible as possible as full an account as is possible in this book that I draw upon what can make for understanding of how the government conspiracy not to solve the crime could and did acheive success. It was not possible to use all such records or to include all the people involved. I hope I have made the most informative use of the records I could.

This was an unprecedented event in our history--at least in our more recent history.

But never before in our history was there a law that says the people have the right to know what their government does. No other country of which I know has this right established in law for its people.

Although bureaucrats and those who control government do not think this way, it is a law that can make for better, more honest, more responsive and more responsible government. It makes possible the rectification of error not perceived by those in authority who err. 19

It is my experience with and under the law that just about all bureaucrats detest it and that all White Houses abominate it and inhibit and nullify it with policies inimical to it and executive orders proscribing and limiting it.

But to a degree that in retrospect I regard as both inadequate and satisfactory it did work, I did obtain these records and with good fortune have been able to draft this book that I hope enables us to learn and perhaps in the future may be

to the memorial for him. Luke Wilson died at close to the same time. France Wheeler married a committee investigator, Allen Sayler, who died about 3-4 years ago. Allen ~~was~~ used to then repairing TV sets. When one of Frances's brothers updated his set, Allen ~~insisted~~ INSISTED that we have it. We had not wanted a TV set when we ~~farmed~~ farmed. He installed it, too. When Frances ~~as~~ was in terminal illness at the NIH and Alan's mother came down to care for the kids, the youngest ate its first solid food that Lil fed it, part of one of the chickens we raised. Frances was a wonderful person. She volunteered on the committee's staff. Despite her disagreement with Bert she was then still living at home and many a night I drove her out ~~to~~ to their Reno Road home.

After working on Nye's Munitions committee investigation Lil went to work for Wheeler's railroad investigating committee.

Lil knew Alger Hiss quite well. She insists that what the ~~Nixin~~ Nixon gang charged him with is impossible for him. I was later for my own reasons absolutely certain that Nixon and Chambers knowingly framed him.

Another of the committee's investigators, Charlie Kramer, brought ~~on the~~ one of Hollywood Ten to our home for access to my research for the planned book on the Dies committee. I let them have whatever they wanted on Edward ~~Dmytry~~ Dmytryk's ~~tpi~~ promise to return it. It turned out he was the fink among them. He returned nothing at all. Years later when I was able to locate him he denied any recollection of any of this at all!

If you do not remember that, they ent to jail because they refused to invoke the Fifth Amendment and insisted on taking the First only.

Virginia, it is a wonderful and an important book. My copy, after Lil reads it, will be available to the young woom women students at Hood. Well, almost half of them are not all that young. They are graduate students, many teachers who return for master's degrees.

If you remember Dave Lloyd, Abt's assistant, he was in the Truman White House and he headed the Truman Library Foundation. He died young.

Last I saw Dan Margolies, another cold-war liberal, he was in the State Dept.

Ralph Winstead went to work for the UAW. He died when he fell through the Lake Erie ice near Cleveland. Ralph was an old wobblie.

Last I saw Bob Wohlforth he headed Farrar, Strauss and Giroux. He was not much interested in my first book. He had no interest at all when ~~in~~ I informed I had in that violent ~~native~~ NATIVE fascist gang, The Minutemen, gave he what showed they had on their hit list Bob's son Tim. When he did not call abck I left the info with his secretary. And he then also did not phone me. When I later gave that same information, in writing to Jerry???, one of the lawyers for the Detroit White Panthers, he got the case thrown out on it. That FBI informer Gnathwohl also penetrated the Greenwich Village branch of the violent wing of the Students for a Democratic Society. He created the situation that led to that terrible explosion. I gave that to the FBI but it did nothing. I mean I gave it copies. All of that part of my files in at the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, where a history prof is one of my dearest friends.

That deposit includes what Dmytryk did not take of my Dies research. It includes carbon copies of unknown completeness of that committee's expenditure records. As soon as Dies and J. Parnell Feeney who changed his name to Thomas came after me I went after them. A friend arrange for three women who had families and did not work to copy every single voucher the committee filed to get paid and repaid. No xerox machines then so they made carbons. That fink among The Ten took all the ribbon copies at the least.

There could be a fine thesis and with a little ~~les~~ else an important book based on what remains of those vouchers. Those native nazis also stole money and their travel records showed that the Members were not present, not the required minimum of one, at some of the alleged hearings. One I remember was when they went after Consumeras Union. One who broke off from it, the stinker J.B. Mathews, was the gang's chief investigator.

...I've finished your book. Its importance as a documentation of our history cannot be exaggerated and, our society being what it is, too little attention was paid to it. I've lived with that, too, but if we do what we can we have met our obligations to our society and to ourselves. There is much more I'd like to say but in addition to needing to get to reading and checking the accuracy of an enormous manuscript in yesterday's (5.25) mail Rev. Graetz, who is a friend of a friend, sent his book Montgomery to me. In this morning's mail the reprint of my book on the King assassination gets started to him.

I, too, have sought to make the system work the way it is supposed to and I, too, had and have faith in the law much as it kicks and screams not to work as it should. I've made it work and I've failed to. Congress amended FOIA over one of my lawsuits in 1974 and that is what opened the FBI, CIA and similar files that were kept secret. But in a sense I failed when as James Earl Ray's investigator the law kept him from getting the trial he never had even though I was able to use the system to actually exculpate him in an evidentiary hearing that was to determine whether or not he would get that trial. The phony liberal federal judge, faced with complete exculpation- and in such a crime!!!- held that on what was before him, whether or not the man accused of killing Dr. King would get a trial- guilt or innocence were immaterial!

I got about 30,000 pages of once secret records, mostly of the FBI, and there is much of my work that will be available for scholars at least, at Hood. In the course of my work, even though it was known that I was seeking to make the law work in that crime that remains unsolved, not a single black would help. My efforts and those of whites in the SCLC, got not a single response. John Conyers, to whom I gave a copy for each member of the black caucus, got no interest from any one of them and when I tried to see a few, not one would see me.

If you know any who might be interested now all this is freely available. As it will be in the future.

But not a single black student or writer has asked me anything about anything.

It is just wonderful that Columbia did those oral histories and that Alabama has put them together in a book and published it!

You refer to the impatience of young blacks with what they thought was King' slowness.

At my encouragement a dear friend who is a Hood history professor got records of it from the FBI and has completed a book on the Poor Peoples Campaign. Whether or not I am right, I believe that aside from having to learn King acted as he thought he could with the situation and attitudes of the time, opting for the chance of success rather than with merely having another demonstration. It is good that youth is impatient and it is good that there is maturity coming from experiences that senses the prospects of success.

He uses in this manuscript something I gave him that may interest you.

When the DJ was forced, in part by the FOIA lawsuit I had filed, to make an internal investigation of how the FBI treated King, with considerable stonewalling and not a little perjury they were able to withhold from me for about six months the incredible record of the field-office records on King, the SCLC and his closer associates and family. When I finally got it (and showed it to Garrow, who was able to use it, gather the information in it, in his Pulitzer book) it was actually 402 pages!

My friend also tabulated the number of preachers who got into FBI files by support of that campaign-hundreds of them!

We do what we can and you, dear Virginia, have done much more than almost anyone can hope to do, with courage, with principle and with a truly remarkable degree of success.

May you add more years to the many you have accumulated and enjoy the satisfaction of having served your country, all of us, as magnifidently as you did!

Our love with our great respect,

Harold

Please do not take the time to respond. Not necessary.

Where I say on page 4 that I had to awaken the lazy Pritch, it was so he could read the brief he was supposed to prepare and hadn't so he could respond to LaFollete's questions.

Harold Weisberg

Sorry about my typing, can't be any better now.